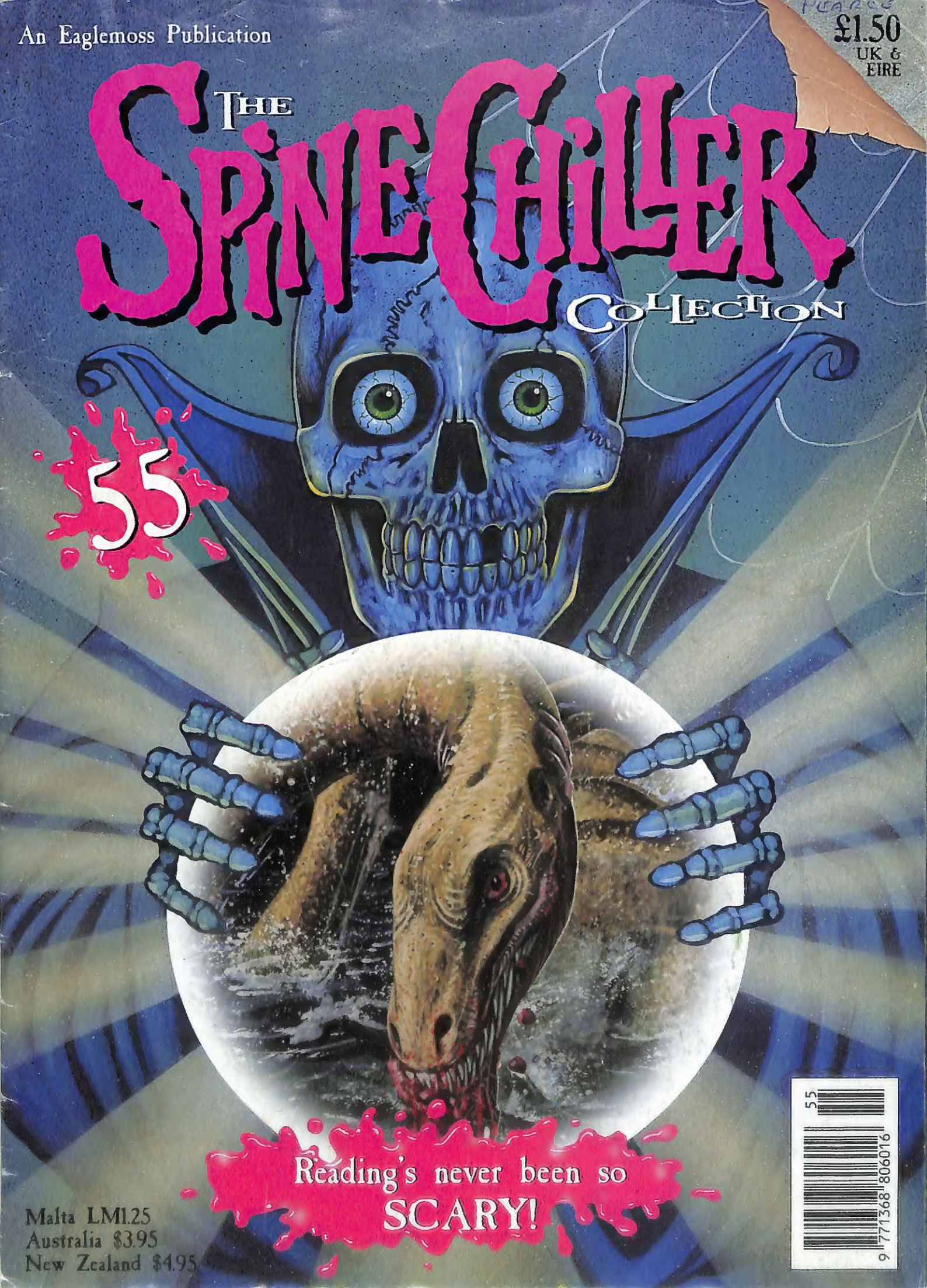
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MONSTER BAIT

Except for being a little homesick, Belinda was having the time of her life. The adventuresome fourteen-year-old had arrived the night before at the home of her uncle Kyle and cousin Megan, who lived on the outskirts of Glenwick, Scotland. Belinda was going to stay with them for the next two weeks while her parents enjoyed a second honeymoon in Hawaii.

"Tell me all about the Loch Ness Monster," she urged Megan as they walked down the trail to the lake where the creature had supposedly been sighted. "I read that some people think it's some kind of giant eel."

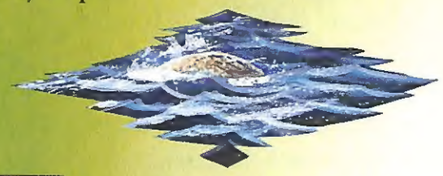
Megan chuckled and tossed her red curly hair. "Yes, and others think Nessie is a huge worm-like dinosaur left over from prehistoric times. To me the whole idea of a monster is just a silly myth," she said in her lilting Scottish accent. "Anyway, it's grown to be one of the biggest tourist attractions in the world."

"Really?" Belinda asked. "I've heard that lots of people have actually taken photos of the monster. I was hoping I might take one myself."



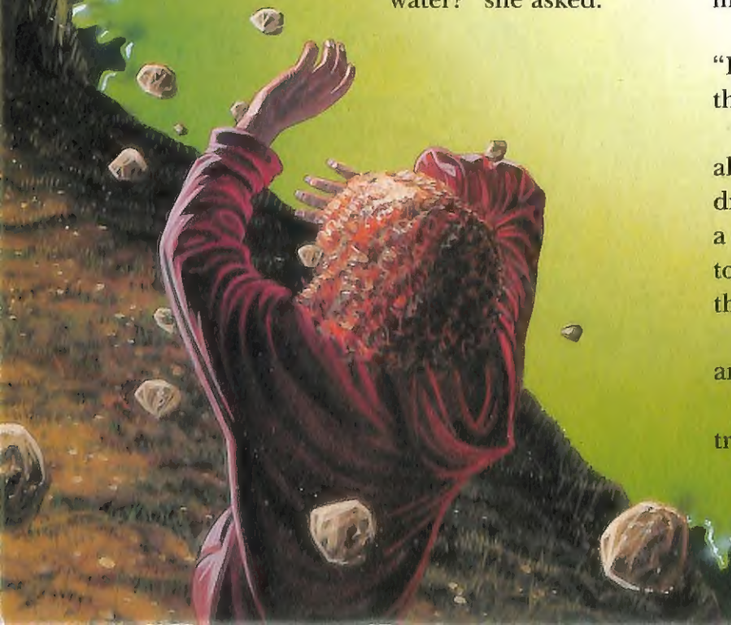
Megan rolled her eyes. "All the photos are fake, I assure you, and the people who claim to have taken them are just phonies looking to make money. In fact, if you ask me, I'm tired of all the silly stories that have been made up about this sea serpent, or whatever it's supposed to be, and I wouldn't mind one bit if I never heard another one."

"You're probably right," Belinda said, a note of disappointment in her voice as she followed her freckle-faced cousin down a rocky slope.



A few moments later the lake came into view, and Megan stopped and pointed at the desolate grey water shrouded in a cold mist. "Well, there's the most famous lake in the world, Loch Ness," Megan announced.

Belinda shrugged. "I guess the monster isn't in today," she said, snapping a few pictures anyway. "Can we get a little closer to the water?" she asked.



"Sure," Megan said. "Let's go, but I bet we still won't see any serpent down there."

The two cousins made their way down to the shore. Approaching the water, Megan pointed out the brown scum on the surface and tiny mounds of the stuff that had washed up on to the sand. "That's peat moss," she explained. "When it rains, the moss washes down from the surrounding mountains into the loch. Lochs are what the Scottish call lakes."

Belinda was stepping over a clump of the peat moss when she was suddenly startled by a splash.

Megan groaned. "Oh, don't worry. It's just the stupid McHufferney twins." She gazed up at the surrounding hillside. "They're always out there trying to scare tourists with their stupid pranks."

Suddenly a barrage of stones came flying down the steep bank towards them. The girls ducked, but one accidentally glanced off Megan's scalp, causing a trickle of blood to run down her cheek.

"Clear off, you idiots!" Megan shouted, wiping away the blood.

"Are you OK?" Belinda asked, as two scraggly-looking boys headed off laughing like hyenas.

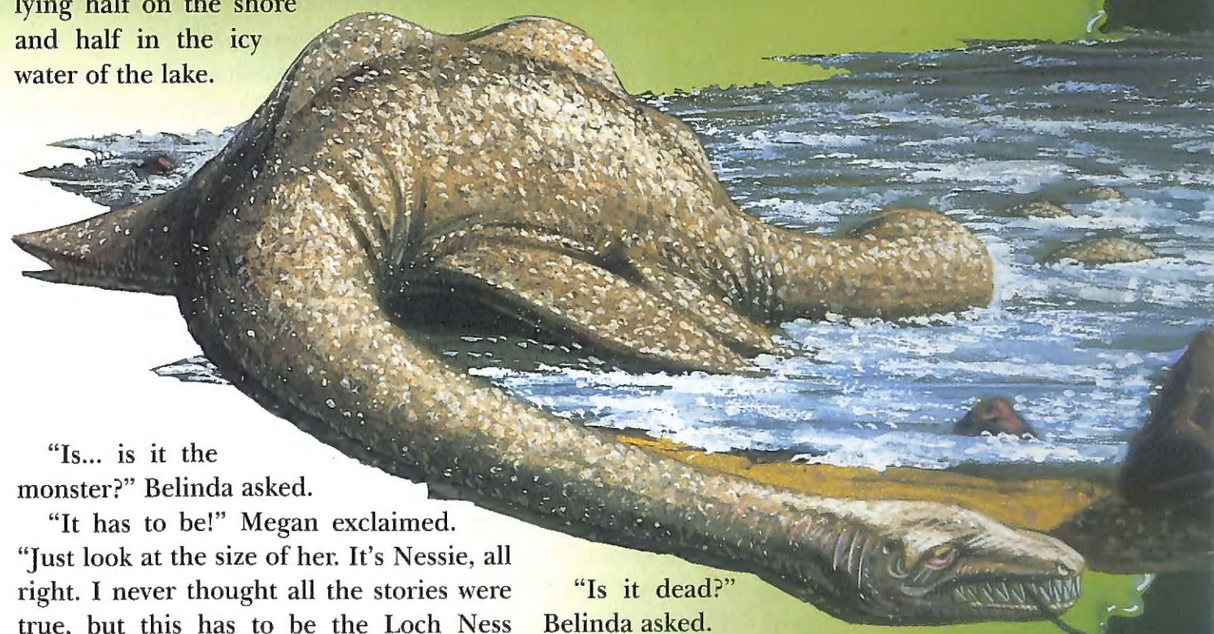
"It's just a tiny scratch," Megan replied. "I'll be fine. But we should leave before those idiots come back."

Together Belinda and Megan hurried along the shore of the lake, which was draped in a hazy curtain of fog. Coming to a cluster of small boulders, they were about to sit down and take a rest when suddenly the hairs on Belinda's neck stood up.

"Megan, look!" she cried, excitement and terror making her voice rise.

Megan's eyes followed Belinda's trembling finger, then her face turned white. "It's not possible!" she muttered, her mouth dropping open in disbelief.

Slowly, their eyes open wide, the two girls approached a huge reptilian creature, lying half on the shore and half in the icy water of the lake.



"Is... is it the monster?" Belinda asked.

"It has to be!" Megan exclaimed. "Just look at the size of her. It's Nessie, all right. I never thought all the stories were true, but this has to be the Loch Ness Monster!" A sad look came over Megan's face. "Gosh, the monster looks sick, doesn't she?"

It was all Belinda could do to keep from running away, but she had to admit her cousin was right. The monster did look extremely sick and, for that matter, utterly helpless.



Mustering every ounce of courage they had, the two girls slowly approached the huge creature lying motionless on the beach. It was spongelike and brown in colour, and along the back of its heavy, snake-like body – which looked almost the size of a bus – were several fins that looked like humps. Its long tail lay half-submerged in the opaque water.

"Is it dead?" Belinda asked.

Megan nodded. "It looks like it."

"The poor thing has probably beached itself," Belinda commented. "Sick whales do that sometimes, so sick sea monsters probably do it too."

The two girls stood in silence for a moment, staring at the still beast. Then Belinda shuddered. Peering closer, she bent over the creature, and with a trembling hand she touched its head.

"Yuk!" she squealed. "It feels like... um... rubber!"

"It's so amazing," Megan said, stepping next to Belinda. "I mean, all these years people have been saying Nessie is a monster, but this creature isn't monstrous at all. It's almost... beautiful!"

Growing braver, Belinda passed her hand near the three slits in the side of the

creature's neck. "These must be its gills," she said. And then, to her surprise, she felt warm, humid air on her palm. "I think it's still breathing!" she exclaimed. "It must be ..."

"Watch out!" Megan screamed, jumping back and pulling Belinda with her. "That means it's alive!"

Clutching each other, almost falling down, the two cousins scrambled away from the gigantic creature and stared at its mouth, now slowly opening to expose rows and rows of curved, oversized fangs. A black, forked tongue flickered between the fangs as a deep, gurgling hiss escaped from the reviving beast, whose eyes slowly opened and fixed on the two trembling girls.

"Look at her eyes!" Belinda gasped. "They're almost human-looking!"

"My goodness!" Megan cried. "Nessie's like a person locked inside a monster. And it looks like she's asking us to help her."

"Poor thing," Belinda said sadly. "I wish we could help her. But how?"

"Come on," Megan said, already taking off. "Let's go and tell my dad. He'll know what to do."

Before following her cousin, Belinda took several quick shots of the dying creature with her camera. Then she whispered, "Goodbye, Nessie, old girl," and hurried away at a fast jog.



Megan's father had always wanted to see the 'real' Nessie, so when the girls told him she was beached on the shore, he followed them hastily back to the lake. But when they finally reached the site where the creature lay, their hearts sank. Totally limp now, her head and long neck draped on the shore, her body half-submerged in the lapping water, Nessie was surrounded by flies... not to mention a large gathering of curious, insensitive humans.

The McHufferney boys, who had thrown stones at Belinda and Megan earlier that day, were among the crowd. They were laughing and prodding at the beached creature along with the rest. It was an ugly sight – dozens of uncaring people gawking and taking pictures of the legendary beast.

"Why can't you leave the poor thing in peace?" Megan yelled.

"We were here first!" one teenager sneered. "So clear off."

"We found the beast, not you," a man with long hair and yellow teeth growled. "The thing belongs to us now. We'll do as we please!"

"We're all going to be rich and famous!" a woman with dirty blonde hair yelled. "So don't nose in on what's ours!"

Shaking their heads at the sorry sight before them, Megan, Belinda and Uncle Kyle watched them all pose with Nessie. Some stood with one foot on the monster and their arms crossed over their chest as though they'd just caught Nessie, while others straddled the poor creature as though riding a dead reptilian horse. The whole thing made Belinda sick.

"What's wrong with you all?" she screamed. "Haven't you got any feelings?"

"There's your answer," Megan said angrily. "Just look at them. They're nothing but a bunch of ghouls!"

"You watch what you say!" one of the McHufferney twins threatened, leering as he approached menacingly. "Or you can bet you'll be sorry."

Disgusted and dejected, Megan, Belinda and her uncle backed away from the crowd.

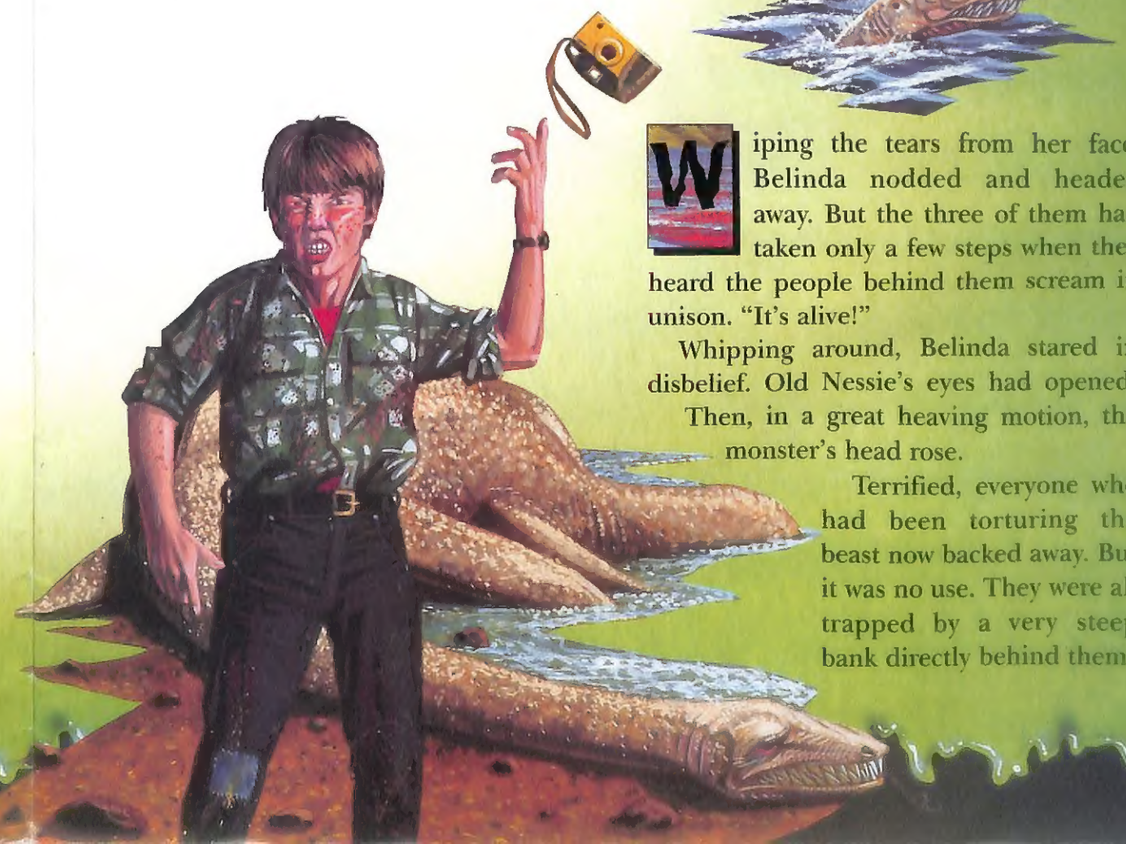
"We'd better leave," Uncle Kyle said. "There's no telling what this bunch will do. They're the monsters here. Anyway, we should notify the authorities – and the university. They'll want to know that Nessie's been found."

Belinda was just about to turn away with her uncle and cousin when she decided to take a couple of quick pictures. But no sooner had she raised the camera to her eye than she felt a hand grab hold of her wrist.

"What do you think you're doing?" a grubby-looking boy demanded as he grabbed Belinda's camera. "Trying to butt in on our find of the century, were you?"

"Oi you, give me my camera back!" Belinda yelled.

"Oh, now look what I've done," the boy said with a laugh as he tossed the camera into the lake.



Belinda was in a rage. Not only had she lost the first pictures she'd taken of the dying Loch Ness Monster, but she'd also lost the camera her parents had given to her as a birthday present. With nothing left to do, she simply burst into tears of misery and frustration.

"I'm so sorry," Megan said, walking up and putting an arm around her cousin. "I wish I could make it up to you, but I can't – any more than I can put brains in these stupid people's heads."

Belinda looked from the sneering laughing faces of the people in the crowd to the poor creature lying helpless on the beach. For a moment she wished that it could somehow recover long enough to avenge itself – and her.

"Let's go, girls," Uncle Kyle said. "Like I just said, it's these people who are the real monsters!"



Wiping the tears from her face, Belinda nodded and headed away. But the three of them had taken only a few steps when they heard the people behind them scream in unison. "It's alive!"

Whipping around, Belinda stared in disbelief. Old Nessie's eyes had opened!

Then, in a great heaving motion, the monster's head rose.

Terrified, everyone who had been torturing the beast now backed away. But it was no use. They were all trapped by a very steep bank directly behind them.

In horror, Belinda, Megan and Uncle Kyle watched as Nessie came closer on her huge, scalloped flippers. It was an incredible sight, and Belinda couldn't believe her eyes. It looked as though the creature was inspecting each person in turn. Then, with its tongue flickering, it reared back its tapering head and let forth a bellowing cry that reverberated across the lake.

"Look!" Megan stammered, pointing out across the water. There, along the surface of the dark, desolate lake, was a great, long ripple of movement as though something was swimming just below the surface at a rapid speed. What is more, it was heading straight for the shore!

"It can't be!" Uncle Kyle exclaimed.

"There are two Loch Ness monsters!" Megan cried.

But Belinda just stood there shaking her head. "No, there aren't!" she gasped, spellbound by what she was seeing. "There are hundreds!"

Sure enough, streaming towards the shore were countless numbers of black, slithering forms headed right for them!

Petrified, Megan, Belinda and Uncle Kyle stood rooted to the spot, watching in awe as Nessie, who had kept an eye on the people who had tortured her, waited for her fellow monsters. It was as though she had decided to hold those people captive while allowing Belinda, Megan and Uncle Kyle to go free.

"Let's get out of here!" Megan cried. "I think Nessie's letting us go!"

But already the other creatures were fast approaching the shore. It looked as though the lake had literally come alive with hundreds of huge, serpentine reptiles, their long, looping necks arching out of the water. Then all at once, they emerged, and with their mouths open wide, their enormous, scale-covered bodies glistening, they slithered everywhere on to the beach.

"Noooo!" Belinda shrieked, certain that at any second she would be devoured by one of the writhing creatures.

But whenever any came near her, Nessie let out a snarling bellow of warning. Instead of attacking Belinda, her uncle, or her cousin, Nessie actually seemed to be guarding them!

The McHufferney boys and the others, however, had no chance. For a few brief moments, the shore was a writhing tangle of humans and serpents. Then, as quickly as they had come, the reptiles were gone... taking their human "snacks" with them.

Nessie, too, was about to plunge back into the lake. But before she did, she gave Belinda, Megan and Uncle Kyle a last look as if to say thanks. Then, with one fluid movement, she slid into the dark waters of Loch Ness, and disappeared into the mist.

All at once the shores were empty and very quiet. Not a trace of the twins or any of the heartless people who had tortured Nessie remained.

For a long while Belinda, Megan and Uncle Kyle stood together in silence.

"That was incredible," Uncle Kyle finally muttered, his voice trembling. "Nessie was just pretending to be dead."

"You know what she was doing, don't you?" Megan asked Belinda.

Belinda nodded, her eyes still fixed on the water. "Uh huh," she muttered. "Nessie was just acting as bait."

"I think you're right, Belinda," Uncle Kyle said. "But there's one thing I don't understand," he added, a puzzled look on his face. "Why do you suppose Nessie and the others left us alone? I mean, do you think it's because we weren't cruel to her?"

"I think it's because somehow Nessie knew we stood up for her," Megan said.

"And so she stood up for us," Belinda added.

"Incredible," Uncle Kyle commented as the three headed up the shore. Absolutely incredible."

The loch was now quiet, with only a few flecks of foam left to show that anything had happened. As the foam disintegrated and disappeared, for an instant the silhouettes of huge wriggling forms could be seen beneath the surface. They too disappeared, and then there was nothing but the dark, silent waters of the lake... and its secret world below.

THE END

OUR HAUNTED WORLD



The jungles of South America are among the most dangerous and least explored parts of the world...

BEASTLY BAD BREATH!

The Indians of the Amazon have long told tales of a bizarre creature called a mapinguary. It is a giant red-furred creature that is said to leave back-to-front footprints! But its most freaky feature is its 'extra mouth' in the middle of its belly! When it feels threatened, it lets out a truly vile pong from this mouth, which, the Indians say, is strong enough to suffocate any attacker! The mapinguary is also said to be bullet-proof! Some scientists think this mystery beast may be related to a 'mylodontid', an extinct prehistoric ground sloth. Whatever it is, the jungles of the Amazon are so dense that it may not be the only prehistoric survivor!



P-P-P-PRETTY 'ORRIBLE!

Don't pee in the Amazon River unless you want the most painful surprise of your life! Lurking in its waters is a nasty little parasite called the candiru (below). This horrific, eel-like fish, which is about 2.5cm long, is attracted to urine streams. It swims up them, all the way into a person's body! Once there, its hooks dig in like grappling irons, making it impossible to remove. It then starts to eat you up from the inside! Yeeeeurgh!



PYRAMID PUZZLE

Tales of lost cities and ancient master builders abound in the dense Amazonian jungle (below). On December 30, 1975, the Landsat II satellite spotted what looks like an ancient city in south-eastern Peru. Its pictures reveal twelve pyramids, some of which are nearly as big as the Great Pyramid of Giza, in Egypt! Various expeditions have set out to find these weird, ancient wonders and several explorers have died in the attempt. Even now – over 20 years later – no one has been able to reach the area. But if anyone does ever reach these pyramids, you can bet that the historians will have to start re-writing history!



SPACE INVADER

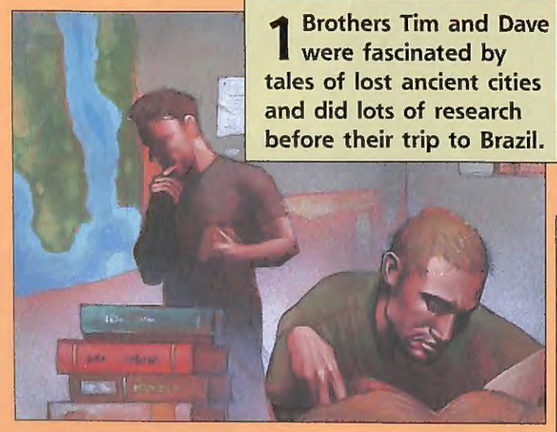
Poltergeists usually focus on one person but, in 1973, in the jungle near Ponta Pora, on the border of Brazil and Paraguay, a poltergeist homed in on an entire village. At first, locals' beds were raised into the air – when they were sleeping – and pushed around by an unseen force! Then a 76-year-old farm worker and local children were pelted by a hailstorm of tomatoes!

When a reporter came to investigate, his jeep mysteriously moved itself 40 metres uphill, leaving no tracks in the mud. Torch batteries and an iron railing materialised on the reporter's bed, only seconds after he'd left the room. Burn marks began to appear all over a house. The final straw came when a farmer's baby disappeared in its pram. The baby was later found, unharmed, beneath a tree on the farm. Eventually, the poltergeist moved its activities elsewhere and village life returned to normal at last.

Lost City

A friend of a friend heard this story about two brothers travelling in Brazil...





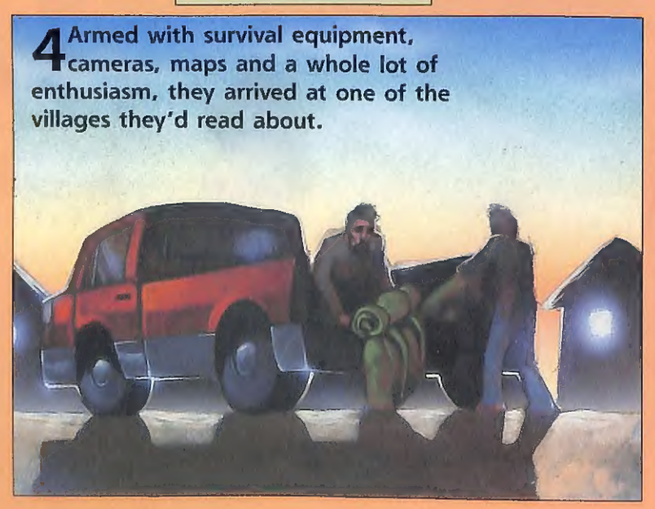
1 Brothers Tim and Dave were fascinated by tales of lost ancient cities and did lots of research before their trip to Brazil.



2 They read about the ancient people of Akakor, who told of how they were visited by an alien race with flying machines!



3 Reports of vast, underground cities, interconnected by secret tunnels, whetted the guys' appetites for an Indiana Jones-type adventure.



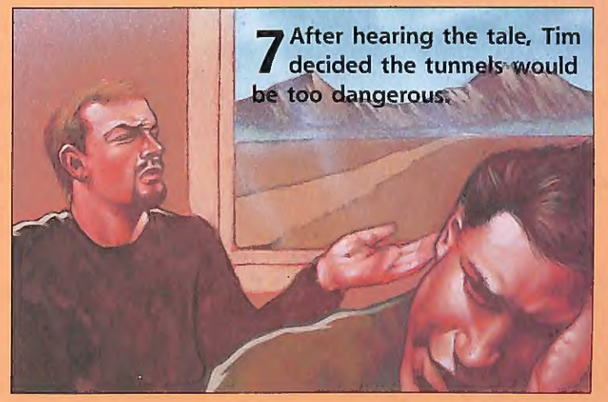
4 Armed with survival equipment, cameras, maps and a whole lot of enthusiasm, they arrived at one of the villages they'd read about.



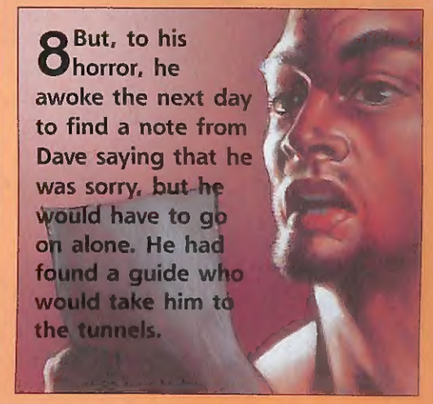
5 Their arrival caused much interest and they met a local man who claimed to be a descendant of the ancient race of Akakor.



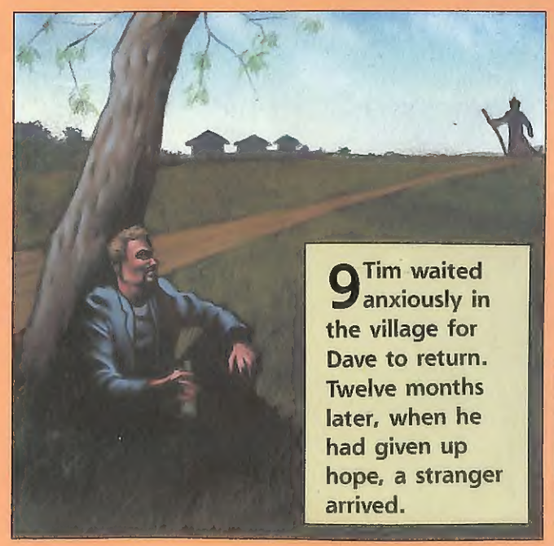
6 They listened, spellbound, as he told of the secret entrances to the tunnels, which were booby-trapped to stop unwanted visitors.



7 After hearing the tale, Tim decided the tunnels would be too dangerous.



8 But, to his horror, he awoke the next day to find a note from Dave saying that he was sorry, but he would have to go on alone. He had found a guide who would take him to the tunnels.



9 Tim waited anxiously in the village for Dave to return. Twelve months later, when he had given up hope, a stranger arrived.



10 So strange was he, with white hair and wild, staring eyes, that Tim did not realise that the man was his long-lost brother!



11 Dave was always to remain a stranger. He never spoke again and all he ever wrote by way of explanation was that he had found the secret tunnels of the Akakor people.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

AMELIA EARHART

Special Investigation File: 55

Subject: the mysterious disappearance of an American aviator
Place: Howland Island, Pacific Ocean

SpineChiller creates a file



Evidence no: 55/1
Amelia and husband, George Putnam, in 1931



Evidence no: 55/2
Amelia in her flying 'uniform' in 1928

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amelia Earhart was born in Kansas, USA in 1897 and grew up to be a popular and independent young woman. During the First World War (1914-18), she nursed soldiers in Toronto, Canada. While there, she also went to an air show, where her lifelong interest in flying began.

In 1920, Amelia took her first flying lesson at Rogers Airfield in Long Beach, California. Soon after, she began her career as a female pilot. Amelia changed her image to suit her new life, cutting her hair short and adopting a 'uniform' of flying coat, scarf, boots and khaki trousers. In 1931, she married George Putnam, a businessman who publicised her daring exploits. Soon she was world-famous. But in 1937, she disappeared.

FLYING FEATS

Here are the details that you requested about American pilot Amelia Earhart's many record-breaking flights:

1 In 1922, she reached an altitude of 14,000 feet, higher than any woman had ever flown before.
2 In 1928, she became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean, but just as a passenger.
3 In 1929, she broke the women's air speed record, reaching over 184 mph.
4 In May 1932, she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic, making the journey in just 14 hours 56 minutes.
5 In August 1932, she broke the women's transcontinental air speed record, flying west to east across the USA in 19 hours, 5 minutes.
6 In 1933, she broke her own transcontinental record, reducing the time by almost two hours to just 17 hours, 7.5 minutes.
7 In 1935, she crossed the Pacific Ocean from Hawaii to the USA in 18 hours, 15 minutes.



Evidence no: 55/3
Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Electra aeroplane flying over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco



Evidence no: 55/4
US President Herbert Hoover presenting a medal to Amelia Earhart in 1932

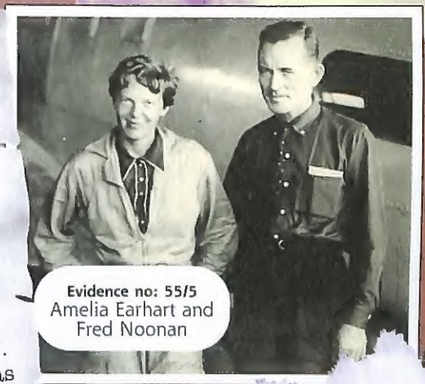
December 1966

FLIER OR SPIER?

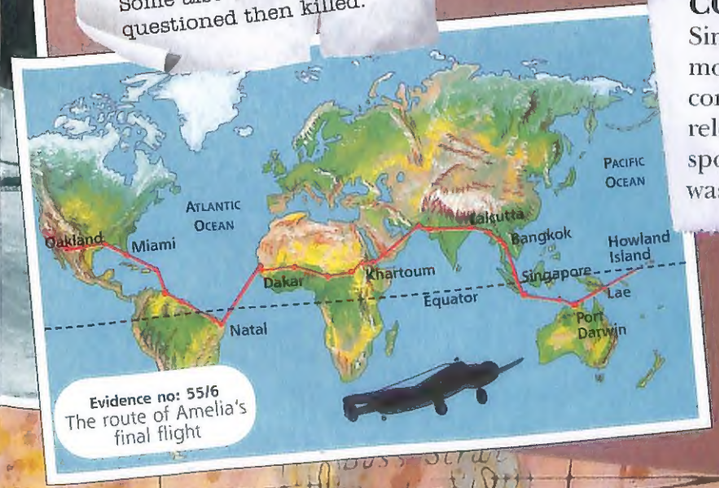
In his brand new book, 'The Search for Amelia Earhart', US writer Fred Goerner suggests Amelia Earhart was a spy.

In the late 1930s, the USA and Japan were competing for islands in the Pacific Ocean. So the US government may have asked Amelia to spy on Japanese activity there.

Goerner says that when Amelia came down near the Japanese-controlled Marshall Islands, she was captured, then taken to Japanese headquarters in the Marianas Islands. The author interviewed many people who saw a female 'spy' arrive there in 1937. Some also claimed she was questioned then killed.



Evidence no: 55/5
Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan



Evidence no: 55/6
The route of Amelia's final flight

New York, July 1937

Dear Milly

Terrible news. You know that on May 21 this year, Amelia Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, set out from Oakland, California to fly around the world at the Equator. Now their attempt has ended in tragedy. On July 2, Earhart's Lockheed Electra plane came down on its way from Lae in New Guinea to Howland Island in the Pacific Ocean. A search has found neither plane nor passengers.

What a waste of life! We can only hope that the two fliers will be found and rescued.

Yours in sorrow

Nancy

Unexplained

CONCLUSION

Since Fred Goerner's book was published, more evidence about Amelia Earhart has come to light. The US government has released documents and new witnesses have spoken out. But no one has proved that she was a spy. Her body has never been found.

CLASSIC SERIAL

Chapter 4

Dracula

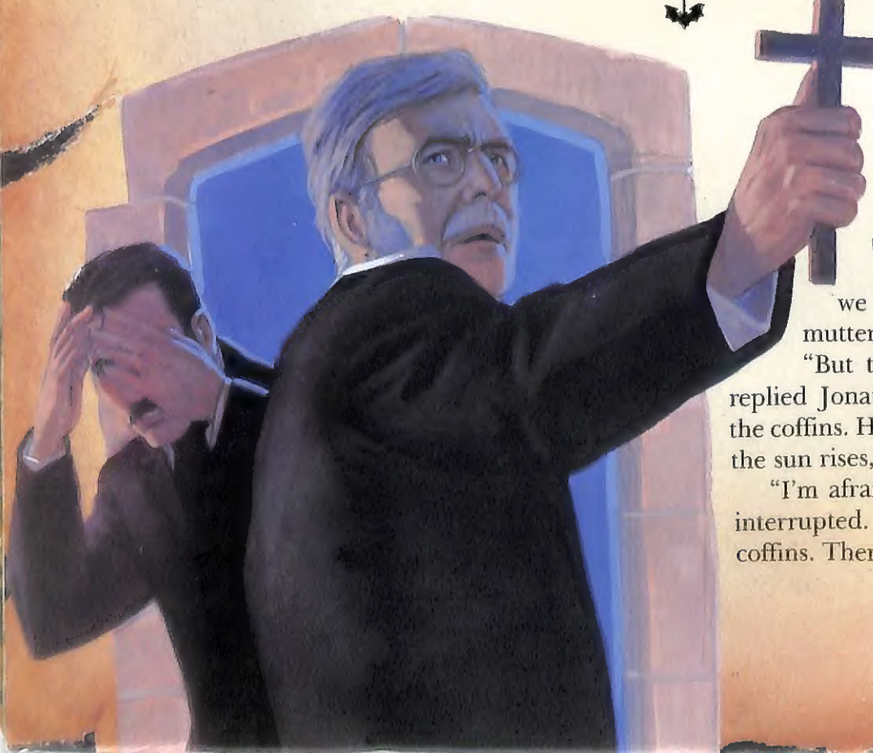
Retold from a story by Bram Stoker

Professor Van Helsing, Dr Seward and Jonathan Harker left the house early the next morning, intent on finding Count Dracula's remaining coffins. They left Mina alone to rest, for she had awoken feeling very weak.

Many hours later, the three men entered a grand house in a street just off Piccadilly in central London. They believed it to be the evil Count Dracula's new home. On the professor's instructions, they crept straight down into the cellar. They were not to be disappointed. The 21 wooden coffins that had been missing all seemed to be stacked up behind some pillars in its dank depths.

The three men quickly set to work and sterilised the coffins. As soon as they had finished, they hurried out of the cellar. But just as Dr Seward reached out to open the front door, the dark figure of Count Dracula seemed to appear from nowhere.

Jonathan cried out and covered his face with his hands. Dr Seward cursed. Their way out was completely barred and Dracula was advancing towards them, snarling. But then the professor produced a crucifix from his pocket. He held it up in front of him and Dracula stopped in his tracks. Dr Seward, meanwhile, wrenched the door open. The three men rushed out and within seconds were in a cab bound for Mina and Jonathan's home.



On the journey home, Jonathan fingered the small wood cross that hung around his neck.

"Remember to use it when we next encounter that fiend," muttered the professor gravely.

"But there won't be a next time," replied Jonathan. "We have sterilised all the coffins. He has nowhere to sleep. When the sun rises, he will be destroyed..."

"I'm afraid that is not so," Dr Seward interrupted. "I counted only 20 wooden coffins. There is still one missing."



"Oh no," groaned Jonathan in horror, as the carriage pulled up at his house. It was dark inside and there was no sign of life.

"Mina is probably asleep," whispered Jonathan, letting the others in with his key. But as Dr Seward and Professor Van Helsing were going to their rooms, they heard a loud cry for help and rushed to see what had happened. Jonathan had found his bedroom door locked and could not get in.

The three men leaned their full weight against the solid oak door. It burst open with a crash. Inside, kneeling on the bed, was Mina. But she was not alone. Count Dracula was there, too, with his night-black cloak wrapped tightly around her.

When Dracula pulled away from Mina, the men saw that she had been gulping blood from an open wound on his chest! Jonathan roared with disgust and fury. Then Dracula turned around to face his enemies. An ugly snarl disfigured his whole face, his eyes flamed and his mouth and chin were smeared with blood. He pushed Mina down on to the bed. She appeared to be in some sort of trance.

"It is too late. My revenge is complete. Your women are mine!" Dracula snarled. Then he sprang towards the group, his outstretched fingers like claws.

Professor Van Helsing immediately held out his crucifix and Count Dracula stopped in his tracks. Then Jonathan followed suit with his wooden cross. Dracula started to back away into the far corner of the room, while the three men walked slowly forward. Suddenly, he leaped through the window and its panes shattered.

Jonathan, Dr Seward and the professor rushed to look out after him, but the evil vampire was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the three friends heard the flapping sound of some monstrous, bird-like creature.

Mina was now awake and crying.

"What happened?" cried Jonathan.

"It was like a dream," Mina said. Then she explained how Count Dracula had entered the locked room, torn at his own chest and made her drink from the wound. Then he had said to her, "Now you have drunk my blood, we are of the same body and mind. You cannot escape."

Underlined words are explained in WORD POWER

Jonathan began to cry when he heard this and Dr Seward led him from the room.

"I had exactly the same dream the night before, but didn't think to tell my poor husband," Mina continued sadly. "He was already so troubled."

"Do not fear, my dear child," soothed Professor Van Helsing, reaching out for his pouch of sacred wafers. He pressed one to Mina's head in an attempt to cleanse her, but it burned a mark on her forehead. Poor Mina screamed in pain.

"I am so unclean, even the holy wafers cannot help me," she sobbed.

Professor Van Helsing held her tight as she wept. When Dr Seward returned, the two men exchanged fearful glances. They had both noticed the puncture marks on Mina's white throat. Count Dracula had most definitely struck.

The following morning, they all ate breakfast in silence. Dr Seward had left early and did not return until eleven. A heavy frown clouded his face as he sat down and told them the distressing news that he had learned.

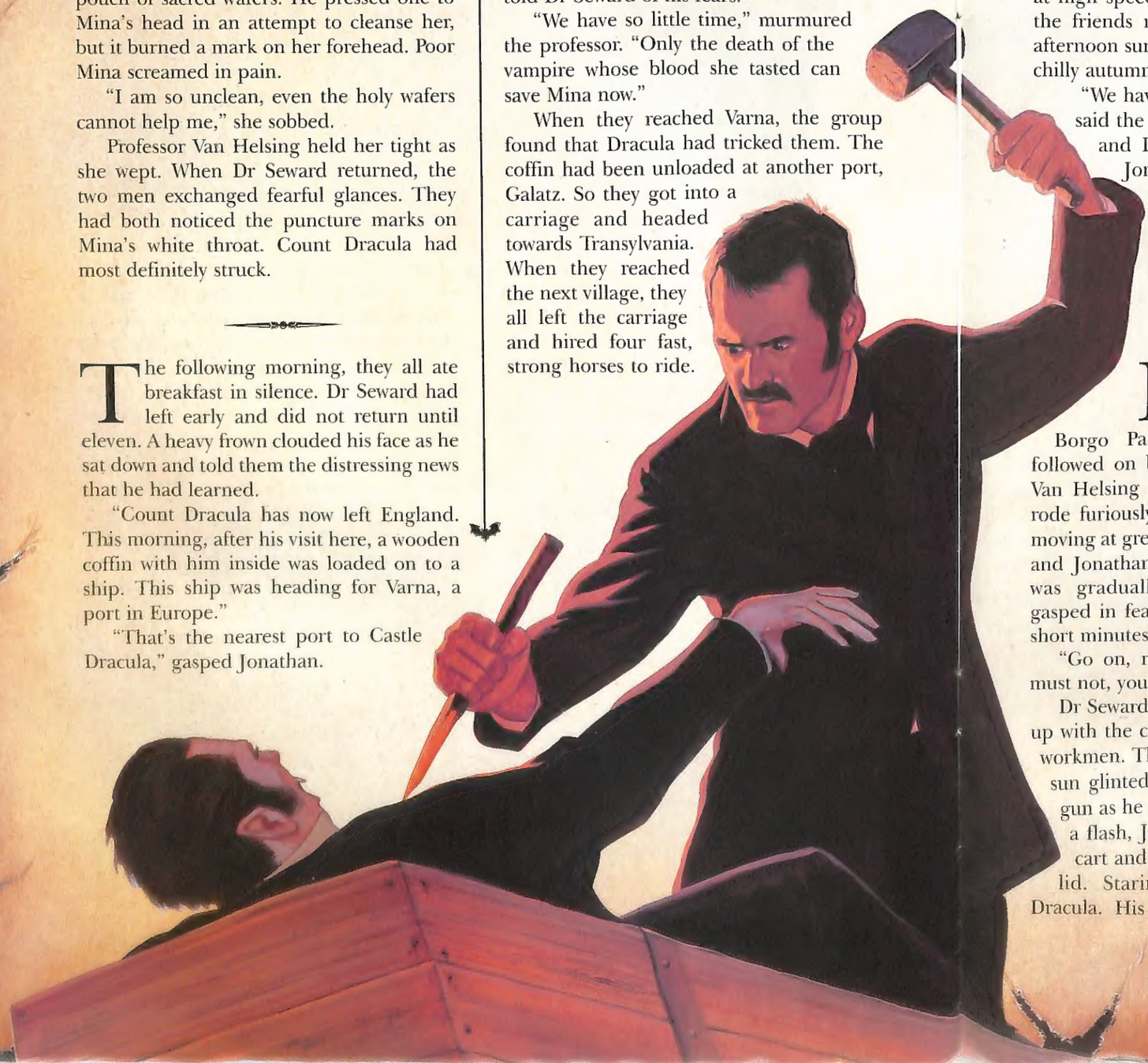
"Count Dracula has now left England. This morning, after his visit here, a wooden coffin with him inside was loaded on to a ship. This ship was heading for Varna, a port in Europe."

"That's the nearest port to Castle Dracula," gasped Jonathan.

There was nothing for it. The three men and Mina set out immediately on a long journey. They crossed the English Channel on a steamship, then continued by carriage. Their aim was to meet the ship and its grim cargo at Varna. Throughout the journey, Mina grew weaker. Professor Van Helsing tried to comfort her husband, Jonathan, but told Dr Seward of his fears.

"We have so little time," murmured the professor. "Only the death of the vampire whose blood she tasted can save Mina now."

When they reached Varna, the group found that Dracula had tricked them. The coffin had been unloaded at another port, Galatz. So they got into a carriage and headed towards Transylvania. When they reached the next village, they all left the carriage and hired four fast, strong horses to ride.



The villagers told them that a small group of gypsy workmen had just been hired to transport a long wooden box through the Borgo Pass. No one would say where the box was going, but the terrified look in the locals' eyes told the party of vampire-hunters all that they needed to know.

With their mounts eating up the ground at high speed, it was not very long before the friends reached the Borgo Pass. The afternoon sun had started to descend and a chilly autumn evening was not far away.

"We have little time before nightfall," said the professor. He urged Jonathan and Dr Seward to ride on ahead.

Jonathan was by now so obsessed with catching Dracula that he had hardly noticed the fangs that were slowly growing over his wife's red lips.

Dr Seward and Jonathan rode as fast as they could through the Borgo Pass. Professor Van Helsing followed on behind with Mina. Suddenly, Van Helsing heard a loud cry ahead and rode furiously to catch up. He saw a cart moving at great speed, with both Dr Seward and Jonathan Harker in pursuit. The sky was gradually darkening. Van Helsing gasped in fear. There could be only a few short minutes left before sunset.

"Go on, my brave young friends. You must not, you dare not fail!" he muttered.

Dr Seward and Jonathan Harker caught up with the cart and confronted the gypsy workmen. The last glimmer of the setting sun glinted on the sides of Dr Seward's gun as he forced them to stop. Then, in a flash, Jonathan leaped up on to the cart and ripped off the wooden coffin lid. Staring up at him was Count Dracula. His eyes, his whole expression, were full of a deep and bitter hatred. As the sun finally dipped down below the horizon, a triumphant sneer swept over the vampire's hideous pale face.

Desperately, Jonathan reached inside his knapsack and took out a stake. Dracula tried to grab it from him, but the young lawyer was too quick. With a mighty swing of his mallet, Jonathan drove the stake through Count Dracula's wicked heart. For a moment, a look of disbelief swept across the vampire's face, but he made no sound.

Professor Van Helsing and Mina arrived just in time to see Dracula's body crumble into dust. At once, Mina snapped out of her trance and gasped weakly:

"Jonathan. My darling!"

Jonathan Harker turned to his wife as if seeing her for the first time. He was flushed from hunting down and destroying Dracula, and trembling violently. His eyes filled with tears as he stared at his beloved Mina. It was many moments before he was able to speak.

"Mina my dear, your unnatural colour has gone. So has the cursed mark on your forehead. You are well again."

"And we are all saved," said Professor Van Helsing, eyeing the empty coffin.

"The nightmare is over."

THE END

WORD POWER

intent on – with the determined aim of

dank – unpleasantly cold and damp

disfigured – spoiled the appearance of

followed suit – did the same

mounts – horses

NEXT ISSUE:
The Violet Car by Edith Nesbit

THE UNEXPLAINED

MORE GHOSTS

Britain seems to be the ghost capital of the world. Perhaps it is because there is no shortage of grand, stately homes with ancient ghostly residents that walk the corridors or rattle their chains at night.

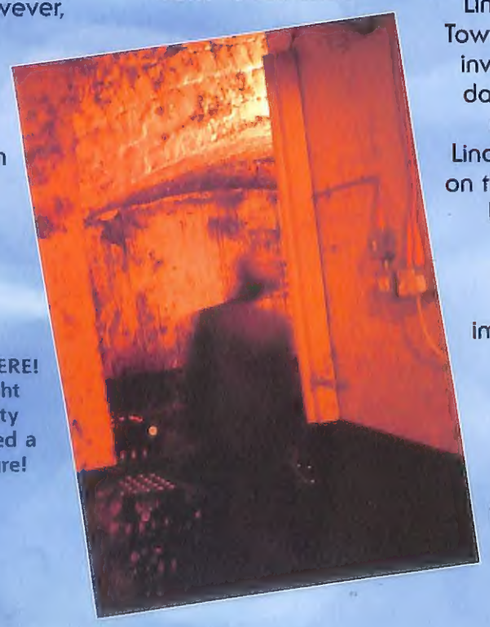
But if recent accounts are to be believed, you are just as likely to encounter a ghost in a modern semi-detached or nightclub as you are in an ancient mansion.

PRIVATE EYE

Modern technology can be used for detecting ghosts. Sometimes this happens deliberately, but often it can be purely accidental. Recently, a video-surveillance camera recorded an extremely strange incident at a nightclub in Oldham, in Lancashire. The police rushed to the club when a security alarm went off, but could find no sign of a break-in and nothing was disturbed. However, when the security video tapes were examined, a man could be seen walking down a corridor – at the exact time the alarm went off – before he vanished through a closed door!



▲ **GHOSTBUSTERS**
A scene from the Hollywood blockbuster movie 'Ghostbusters'.



▶ **FANCY SEEING YOU HERE!**
The photographer thought he had snapped an empty cellar, but then discovered a ghostly man in the picture!

THE INVISIBLE MAN

A truly modern ghost story was reported from the family home of Linda Simpson in Runcorn New Town, in the north of England. It involved Linda's three-year-old daughter Lisa, who seemed to acquire an imaginary friend. Linda found her daughter sitting on the stairs one night, having a lengthy conversation with no one! From the style of conversation, Linda guessed she was talking to an imaginary adult. A few weeks later, Linda found her daughter having another conversation of the same nature. This time the child told her mum that she was talking to a visitor, a nice old man with white hair. He had talked about Lisa's parents and told her to be nice to them. The next day, Lisa was flicking through old photographs when she pointed to Linda's grandfather and said "that's the one who comes to see me!"

Linda's grandfather had lost contact with the family so had never seen his great-granddaughter. He made up for lost time after he died by becoming Lisa's invisible friend.



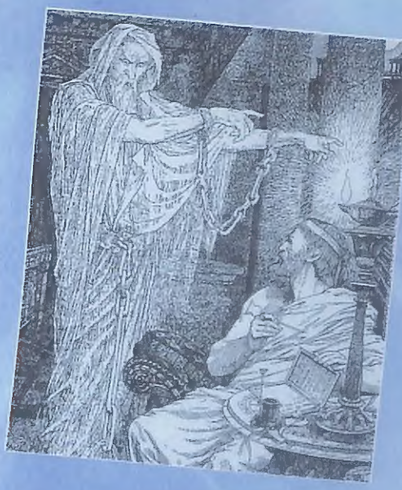
GHOSTBUSTERS

Scientists are completely unconvinced by eyewitness accounts of paranormal activity. They always want to see hard physical evidence before they listen to people raving on about seeing a ghost!

However, state-of-the-art technology is beginning to provide the back-up to people's stories. Sophisticated sensors that monitor temperature changes, electrical fields and moisture in the atmosphere all give an indication of a ghost's presence. Infra-red cameras, highly acute audio equipment and forensic investigations can also be used to discover the origin of ghostly phenomena. Investigators also test witnesses' psychological profiles to judge if they are telling the truth, or simply seeking attention.



▲ **FREAKY FACES**
These ghostly faces kept popping up near ships in 1924. They fitted the description of two sailors who had just died and been buried at sea.



GREEK GHOST ▶
This is a scene from the first ghost story ever investigated, in 7AD. In this scene, the ghost in chains leads the Greek philosopher to some unburied bones in his house.



▼ **KNOCK KNOCK! WHO'S THERE?**
This illustration shows ghost skeletons trying to break into a medieval home.

HALLOWE'EN PUZZLES

WEIRD WORDS!

What is this scrawny skeleton trying to say? See if you can spell it out by replacing each letter shown here with another very close to it in the alphabet!

SQHBL NS USDBS

FIGURE IT OUT!

The old book on the ground is losing its pages! Can you work out what the numbers on the torn pages have to do with Hallowe'en?

5

2

15

8

1

10

DEVILS' PLAYGROUND

Little devils have come out to play! Count how many are there and then find out what makes one different from the others in two ways?

SPELL - CHECK!

Can you rearrange the letters on the sign below into the three-word name for Hallowe'en?

ASHLE WALL VOLE

FACE FACTS

Hanging up or carrying Jack o'Lanterns – hollowed-out pumpkins or turnips – is a Hallowe'en tradition. But did you know that the tradition stems from the legend of an Irishman called Jack who upset the Devil? The Devil threw a piece of coal from Hell at him. Jack caught the coal in a hollow turnip and had to roam the Earth with his unlucky lantern forever!

FASCINATING FACTS

Hallowe'en is the time of the year when the ghosts of the dead are said to slip through the 'thin curtain' that separates the land of the living from the land of the dead. It is also a time when witches and devils are said to be at their most powerful.



WEIRD WORDS: TRICK OR TREAT. Replace each letter with the one that precedes it or follows it in the alphabet.
SPELL – CHECK! ALL HALLOWS EVE.

ANSWERS

HOUSE IT OUT: Hallowe'en falls on 31st October. Adding the five numbers on the two pages together = 31. The remaining number is 10, the tenth month of the year. Hence: J/A/10.
DEVILS PLAYGROUND!: There are 13 little devils. The devil using on the big pumpkin (by the skeleton's leg) has smaller horns and no beard.
TOTALLY BATS!: There are 66 bats in total.
FREAKY FACES!: There are three matching pairs of pumpkins 13 and 21, 8 and 20, 6 and 20